

Mental Ability-1934

BRITONS DON'T AGREE ON NATIVE BRAIN TESTS

Scientists There Still
Trying to Prove Afri-
cans Inferior People.

S BASIS FOR THE
COLONIAL POLICY

Say Blacks Can't Be
Developed Fully.

LONDON, Eng.—Some Britons who have found it necessary to bolster up the government's policy in the famous Tshekedi case are still trying to prove that the native African, no matter what his training, is not capable of the same mental development as that of European whites.

On the other hand, many whites who are for justice and fair play in this case have locked horns in a spirited controversy with the government.

Kenya Doctor

The leading exponent of the "inferiority" group is Dr. H. L. Gordon, white, visiting physician to Mathari Mental Hospital at Nairobi. In a recent article in the London Times, Dr. Gordon declared that from observations made by him in Kenya Colony, South Africa, he had come to the conclusion that natives did not possess the same capacity as white men.

In reaching this conclusion, the British doctor not only uses the familiar brain tissue weight and the quantity measurements, but also observes that only natives who have had a "smattering" of European education are afflicted with such diseases as "dementia praecox."

He also uses a graph to show that the native brain curve capacity ends practically where the white man's begins during the first 20

years of growth. Some idea of the practical application of his findings on the treatment of Africans under British rule may be judged by his following statement:

"The situation is indeed a very urgent one, because, in the first place, the difficulties are increasing as European influences extend and the native, in consequence, loses his simplicity, and in the second because more and more administrative measures are being taken every year, many of which may conceivably be based on fundamental error."

"Finally, I should like to ask: Shall the members of an uncivilized race be judged by the standards of the civilization into which they are being invited, or by standards for their own race found in them by this civilization?"

Dr. Gordon's question penetrates medicine, law, education, and all administration. It ought not to be left unanswered where civilized and uncivilized live together in close association. I take the view that the hand of science with all its power, has not yet been held out to assist the native to rise."

Professor Disagrees

On the other side of the controversy comes Professor Cyril Burt of the University of London, who sees very little importance in pure quantitative brain measurements. On the question of African natives he says:

"It is a commonplace among psychologists of today that mental characteristics should be judged by mental symptoms, not by physical. At the present moment several investigators are endeavoring to devise sound psychological tests which may serve to measure the intelligence of native populations. Dr. Oliver, for example (East African Medical Journal, September 1932), has recently applied such a test to two large schools in Kenya—one consisting of native boys and the other of children of European settlers. He found that the average intelligence of the native pupils was only about 85 per cent of that of the Europeans; nevertheless 14 per cent of the natives actually surpass the European average. Since the fathers of the European children were largely members of the Civil Service and professional classes, Dr. Oliver's standard was somewhat high; and his tests only covered a very small sample of the population. I understand, however, that the Education Department of Kenya is proposing to apply such tests to all candidates for admission, and further results will therefore be awaited with much interest."

Huxley's View

"Meanwhile the view of nearly every psychologist would probably coincide with that of Professor Julian Huxley:—

"I am prepared to believe that if we ever do devise a really satis-

factory method of measuring inborn mental attributes, we shall find the races of Africa slightly below the races of Europe in pure intelligence and probably certain other important qualities. But—and the but is a big one—I am perfectly certain that if this proves to be so, the difference between the racial averages will be small; they will be only an affair of averages, and the great majority of the two populations will overlap as regards their innate intellectual capacities."

DAYTON, O.
HERALD

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HIGH AND LOW BROWS.

IT IS an age-old assumption that a high forehead is an indication of intelligence. Measurements by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, of the Smithsonian institution, and other anthropologists, cast doubt upon this theory. Recent studies, according to the Journal of the American Medical association, included 510 "old Americans" whose ancestors have lived in this country for at least three generations; 118 old Americans from the highlands of northeastern Tennessee, and 25 old Americans who are members of the National Academy of Science.

Only negligible differences were found between the average height of the forehead in these groups. The old Americans in Tennessee, an extremely backward group, averaged up fairly well with the other classes, including the scientists, who must be taken as a very advanced group.

Other studies were made of the foreheads of American Indians, American Negroes, old Americans and Alaska Esquimos. The latter were placed at the head of the class. "Considering the character of the groups," says the Journal, "the data shows the fallacy of the idea that a high forehead in general indicates high intellectuality."

Here are words of comfort for the "low brow" in the physiological sense. The hair line, it is indicated, is not the hall mark of intellectual capacity and quality. What's behind the "dome," not the dome itself, makes or mars the man.

Rocky Mount, N. C. Telegram

TESTS GIVEN TO NEGRO CHILDREN

American Scientists Seek to
Learn Mental Abilities of
Jungle Children

New York, April 7 (S. S.)—The experience of giving mental tests to 50 Sousous children, primitive West-African Negro youngsters in the isolated all-native village of Koba, French Guinea, was described to the New York branch of the American psychological association, in a report by Drs. Elaine F. Kinder, psychologist of New York, Solomon Machover, of Bellevue Psychiatric hospital, and Henry W. Nissen, of Yale university.

The tests were given with the aid of an interpreter who had been previously trained in the technique. All sorts of difficulties were encountered, but chief amongst them was that the children, although apparently of normal brightness, simply could not comprehend what they were to do with many of the tests. These children have had very little contact with the culture of modern civilization and the experimenters conclude that his isolation accounts for the fact that they did well on some tests, but could not even attempt others. None of the tests used were dependent upon the use of language.

In order to arrive at some sort of estimate of intelligence quotient, or the children's "brightness for their age," it was necessary to guess at the chronological age of the youngsters. No records were kept by the tribe, and although the tribal chief and the parents were questioned, they could not help much. Consequently a combined estimate by the examiner, the interpreter, and a white mechanic attached to the laboratory was used.

The difference between the scores made by these primitive children and Negro children in the United States is to be accounted for by the vast differences between the life and culture of America and of Africa, the investigators conclude. This is confirmed by the fact that the test quotients of the younger children were consistently higher than those of the older ones.

INTELLIGENCE TEST HELD OF LITTLE USE

Validity in Tracing Ability in
Vocational Lines Also
Doubted in Report.

'TRICKS' OF STUDY SEEN

Historical Group Survey Finds
Assumption of Guidance Based
on 'Misconceptions.'

Doubt as to the validity and utility of the intelligence test as an instrument for the measurement of intellectual quality or ability is expressed in another instalment of the report of the Social Studies Commission of the American Historical Association made public yesterday.

"At present there seems to be no general agreement among students as to what it is that the test actually measures," the commission declares.

Moreover, it asserts "the fact that at the present moment in American society the intelligence of the population manifests a certain distribution with respect to occupations throws little or no light on what the distribution should be in the interests of society or may be as occupations shift under the movement of ideas and interests."

Held No Precise Guidance.

"Neither does it give precise and positive guidance in determining whether a child with a given level of intelligence should be advised to enter a particular occupation or profession, or embark upon a particular career, irrespective of his economic and cultural circumstances," the commission declares. "Such findings give not the slightest clue to the social utility of the various occupations from racketeering to banking, or to the values and restraints which society may or should place on occupational classifications and activities."

"Wide and deep knowledge of the methods and findings of intelligence testing is in itself utterly inadequate to the task of determining social and educational policies, because such policies have their roots in a complex of ideas and interests in which conceptions of intelligence gradation condition, not determine, purpose."

"In the light of the social sciences the rating of an engineer or a

Y. M. C. A. secretary as more important or more valuable than a skilled artisan is to be regarded as utterly beyond the competence of objective determination."

If the mindings and measurements of testing with respect to character and culture are taken at their face value, the commission declares, "no conclusion with respect to social policy and action automatically emerge from such findings and measurements."

Two Evils Are Described.

"Where the new-type tests are chiefly relied upon, two major evils are sure to emerge—the placing of a fictitious rating on the student who is clever at learning the 'tricks of the trade,' and the encouragement of students to go to college or into life without ever having to put forth continuous and constructive effort in thinking and writing in the fields of history, political science, economics, sociology, and human relations," the commission continues.

"The use by administrative officers of the findings of objective tests in grading and promoting teachers encourages the latter to concentrate on the mechanical aspects of learning, thought and study. When they form the sole or major basis for judgment they are a menace to education."

"The general emphasis in these tests on vocabulary encourages reliance on verbalism rather than thought, and leads to the acquisition of words rather than to growth in understanding and competence in the realm of social relationships."

"The assumption that new-type tests can guide and measure the efficiency of instruction in the social sciences is based on misconceptions of social processes, and such tests, except where used as occasional check on other examining methods, do positive damage to the minds and powers of children in the ways already indicated."

NEW YORK SUN

SEP 27 1934

Color Blindness in Negroes.

Kenneth B. M. Crooks of Hampton Institute in Science.

Of 1,628 male Negroes tested at Hampton Institute 61 or 3.75 per cent were color blind according to the Ishihara charts. Among these there was one case of monocular blindness, the right eye being red-green blind while the left eye was normal. Among the 651 female Negroes tested, no case of color blindness was observed.

Our results, from a total of 2,279 Negroes, show a C. B. I. (color blindness incidence) of 3.75 per cent for males (61 cases in 1,628) and agree closely with Garth's report (1933) of 2.9 per cent for Southern Negroes (21 cases in 533) and almost exactly with Clements's (1930) report on Connecticut Negroes of 3.7 per cent or 12 cases in 323. Our results of 0.0 per cent C. B. I. for 651 Negro females agree tolerably well with Garth's 0.8 per cent (4 cases in 496 Southern Ne-

groes) and 0.0 per cent or no cases in 165 Northern Negroes, probably in Colorado.

Professors Find Negroes Adapt Selves To Any Life

Although Whites Show Clean-Cut Superiority In Tests Of Intelligence, They Do Not Adjust Themselves To Every-Day Problems Quite So Quickly

TUSCALOOSA, Oct. 13.—(Special.)—The white race is not clearly superior to negroes in the matter of making adjustment to every-day problems of life, two University of Alabama psychology professors concluded today after a survey of white and negro students in both the North and South.

Whites show a clean-cut superiority in strict tests of intelligence, dealing with abstract situations, but "evidence of superiority in personality adjustment is not so plain."

The tests were made by Dr. Verner Sims, associate professor of psychology at the University of Alabama, and Dr. James R. Patrick of Ohio university. They published their conclusions in the Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology.

Adapt Selves Better

The fact that negroes show unusual ability to adapt themselves to every-day situations while whites dominate in intelligence tests "is in line with recent discussions indicating the low correlation between intelligence and personality," the psychologists point out.

The survey was made among students at Ohio university and Wilberforce college in the North, and at the University of Alabama and Tuskegee Institute. It included tests for introversion-extroversion, dominance-submission, self-sufficiency and neuroticism.

'Clinging Vines'

Whites tend more to be introverts than do negroes, the survey showed. That is, they seek solution and escape from their problems within themselves, and are more subjective in their thought processes.

Dr. Sims and Dr. Patrick also confirmed the popular belief that the "clinging vine" type of girl is to be found more frequently in the South than elsewhere. At any rate, Northern girls showed up in the tests as the more dominant.